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幻冬舎コミックス

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Lord Fangshi,
do you see the smoke?
Yes.
It smells of burning blood.
That damned King Zhou. So he anticipated this and started the fire with a view to committing suicide, eh?
It is the natural fate of a tyrant to destroy himself
Still, we cannot disregard that devil woman.
Misfortune unheard of in all the Great Thousand Worlds will surely befall us if she is allowed to escape unscathed.

ONWARD!

DAJI!!!
You serve your kingdom well, patriots.
It is an admirable thing.
Hmph!
What's that?
KING ZHOU?!
You...

YOU KILLED YOUR MASTER WITH YOUR OWN HANDS?!
Master?
Who is this master you speak of?
King Zhou may have been a despicable tyrant, but he was only human,
while I have mastered sorcery and seen the passing of innumerable kalpas.
The pools of wine, the forests of meat, the men and women
cavorting naked together until they were satisfied and drinking late into the night. For me, it was just a way to kill time.
He came to inquire about my mood when my patience for his games had been exhausted, so I butchered him.

You call the acts of immorality and evil that went on here,
sinking this palace into the depths of despair and filling the fields of the people with grief, a way to kill time?
Yes.
A shrivelled old man cannot possibly satisfy me,
but perhaps your blood will warm my body a little, hm?
FOX spirit Bane!

NO!

Now then...

Shall I be on my way?
Hopeless wasn't it, Fangshi?
Your Chinese magic is no match for...

but it wouldn't do to let people see you with a skull hanging from your throat.
A fox spirit may attain its powers by wearing a skull on its head and worshipping the stars,
C...
Curse you...
I will not be removed by force Nor can I be broken.
I did not cast the spell upon you, woman.
I cast it on myself

More than a thousand years before Christ,
the last king of the Shang Dynasty, Zhou, was seduced by an enchantress, and in time his injustice led to his ruin.
That fair-skinned, golden-haired, nine-tailed fox spirit was known as Daji in China and as royal consort Kayo in India, where she beguiled its crown prince, Hansoku.
Then, after a period of around two thousand years she made the crossing to Japan, and there summoned a dark cloud of depravity once again. But those of you who know this already will have to read the following tale— That's all, for now
Well, where are you thinking of going?
Wherever it is, I will accompany you.

TRANSLATION NOTES

King Zhou – "Zhou" is the posthumous name given to Di Xin, last king of the Ancient Chinese Shang Dynasty who died in 1046 BC. Legend depicts him as the quintissential great man who became depraved due to the influence of a beautiful woman. In reality he may well have been a corrupt tyrant, since he was betrayed by his advisors and overthrown by King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty, who interpreted a planetary alignment as proof that Di Xin's heavenly mandate had been revoked. Di Xin then killed himself by torching his palace.

Fangshi – An unofficial rank given to certain learned men of Ancient China, originating in the Warring States Period and eventually getting absorbed into Taoism. The exact meaning is difficult to define, but in broad terms it denotes mastery in one or more esoteric fields, such as medicine, the sciences, or mysticism. In this case, the Fangshi seems to be an occultist.

Great Thousand Worlds – The concept of multiple universes is prevalent in Buddhist doctrine: if our world is one universe, the Great Thousand Worlds are equivalent to one billion. It's generally believed that Buddhism didn't become prominent in Central Asia until the beginning of the Common Era, so it seems strange that the Fangshi makes this reference.

TRANSLATION NOTES

Kalpa – A Sanskrit word often translated as "aeon" from Buddhist cosmology. The length of a single kalpa tends to be at least a few billion years.

Wine Pool, Meat Forest – Daji's description of how she and King Zhou liked to kill time is quoted almost ad verbatim from The Records of the Grand Historian by Sima Qian. The book claims that Zhou built a pool filled with wine in his palace, and an island with meat hanging from trees. Men and women would float naked in boats upon the pool, drinking wine with their hands and eating meat from the branches overhead. Thereafter the phrase "wine pool, meat forest" was used to describe the epitome of decadence.

China – Of course during the Shang Dynasty, which was limited to the Yellow River valley, China as we know it did not exist. The Japanese name used here, "Morokoshi", wasn't coined until the early Heian Period almost 2,000 years later. But despite being derived from a Chinese term for its contemporary dynasty, "Da Tang" or "Great Tang", it was purely geographical.

India – Specifically the name used here is "Tenjiku", the Japanese form of the Chinese word "Tianzhu", supposedly derived from the word "Hindu".